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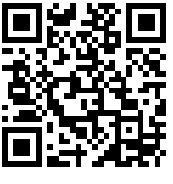

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The Cheshire Regiment

and its

Miniature Colour at Mons

By F. Simpson, F.S.A.

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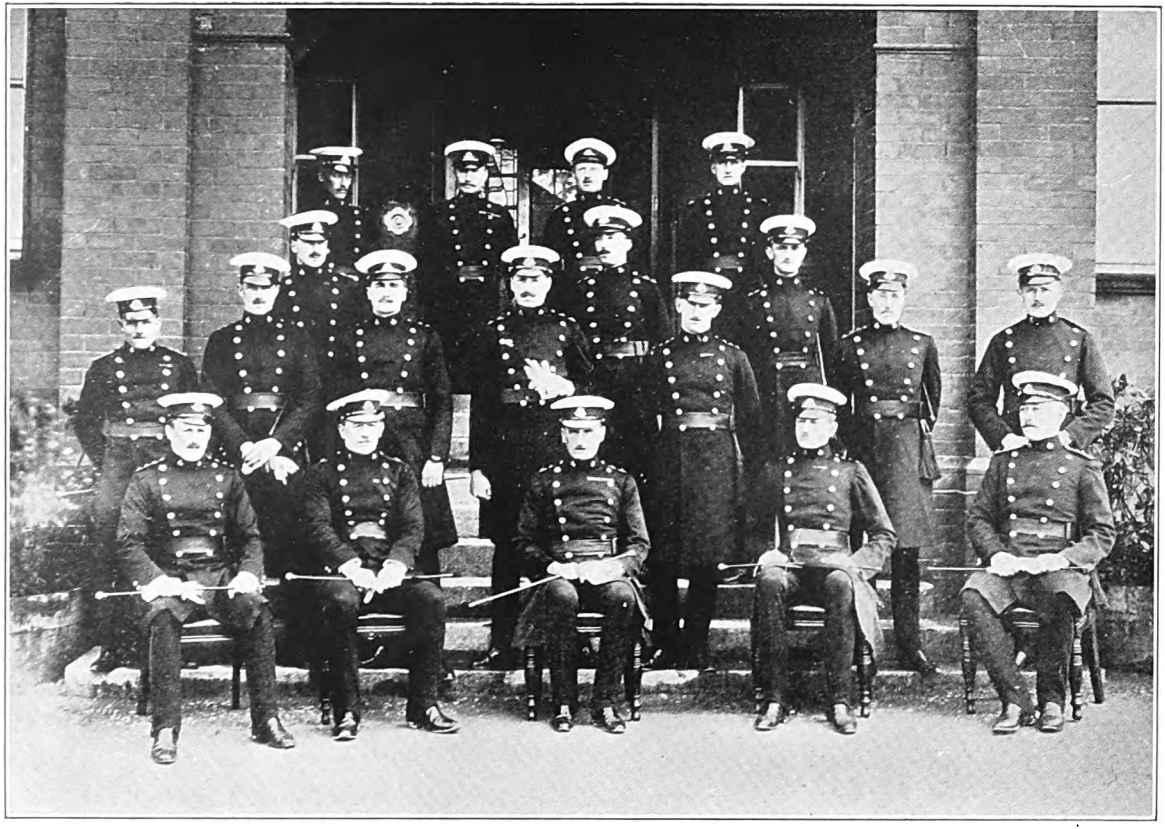

The officers, 1st Battalion, Londonderry, 1914. *See Page 74.*

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SECOND EDITION

The Cheshire Regiment
or
22nd Regiment of Foot

THE FIRST BATTALION AT

MONS

AND

THE MINIATURE COLOUR

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To the memory of eight thousand four hundred and seventeen soldiers of all Battalions of the Regiment, who laid down their lives for their King and Country in the War of 1914–1918."

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FOREWORD.

Bourne Hill,
St. Albans,

Mr. Simpson has written a detailed and intimate account of the doings of the 1st Battalion The Cheshire Regiment in the opening days of the Great War, and in the memorable fighting of the British Regular Army round Mons on the 24th August, 1914. It is right that every man in the Regiment, and the County, whose name we have borne for upwards of two centuries, should know how the battalion upheld on that day the proud record of an old English County Regiment, the 22nd or Cheshire Regiment of Foot.

W. HASTINGS ANDERSON, Lt.-General,
Colonel The Cheshire Regiment.

25th May, 1929.

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INTRODUCTION.

IN 1918 the Great War came to an end and the Armistice was signed on November 11th of that year. Many Regimental War Histories have been published, but up to the present time no account has been written of the war service of our County Regiment, the old 22nd or Cheshire Regiment, of Foot. As time passes, and the men who took part in the various actions, especially Mons, get dispersed to various parts of the country, and abroad, the difficulty of linking up the various details become greater.

No County Regiment did better service during the war than the Cheshire Regiment. The stand of the 1st Battalion at Mons, where, against tremendous odds, it covered the retirement of the left flank of the 5th Division and was the last to leave the battle-field, will be handed down in military history as one of the great feats of the war.

In his official report, Lt.-General Sir Charles Fergusson, in command of the 5th Division said :— "The 1st Cheshire Regiment, together with the 1st Norfolk Regiment, were detached to cover the left flank of the 5th Division during the withdrawal on the

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day in question, [24-8-14] the division having been ordered to hold its ground until the British Force had fallen back." "It was due to the gallant action of these two battalions that the Division was able to extricate itself."

Major-General Lord Edward Gleichen, in command of the 15th Infantry Brigade, refers in his report to "the gallant fight put up by the Cheshires who formed one of my best battalions."

In writing the following account of the Battle of Mons, or that part of it with which the Cheshire Regiment was more closely associated, I have endeavoured to draw a picture as accurate and clear as possible. My thanks are due, and freely given, to the officers and non-commissioned officers of the Battalion who took part in the action, and who have checked this account, and added little details which, in course of time, might otherwise have been forgotten; to Lt.-General Sir W. Hastings Anderson, K.C.B. (Colonel of the Regiment), for reading my MS., and writing a Foreword to it; to Lt.-General Sir Cecil Romer, K.C.B., K.B.E., C.M.G., General Officer Commanding-in-Chief Western Command, who served as G.S.O.I. on the staff of the 5th Division during the earlier actions of the Great War, for kindly reading my MS., and for valuable advice; to Mr. Horace F. Davies, F.S.I., for kindly making me the sketch plan of the field of action; and to the Editor of "The Oak Tree" (the Regimental Journal), Captain Elliot, D.S.O., for the loan of blocks for illustration, etc.

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Sir Charles Napier, when presenting new colours to the Regiment at Dugshai, India, Monday, 18th November, 1850, said :—" Ensigns [Monk and G. O. Deane] take these new colours from my hands. I know you will carry them gloriously in the day of battle, and, if you fall, still the Colours of the 22nd will advance ; for brave men will never be wanting in the field to bear them forward to victory with fire and steel. And now 22nd take your Colours, and let the ancient city of Chester, begirt by its proud old Walls, exalt in the glories of its own brave Regiment."

Could the spirit of " The Great White Chief " (often described as the man with the face of an eagle, and the eye of a hawk, and whose last words were an expression of love for the men of the Regiment) speak, it would say, in reference to the stand they made at Mons—" Well done my brave old 22nd, you are not a whit inferior to your forefathers at Meeanee. You have done all I would have expected of you ! "

FRANK SIMPSON.

Chester, 1929.

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The Old Contemptibles

(The 1st Battalion leaving Derry for the front, early morning 14th Aug., 1914).

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THE CHESHIRE REGIMENT.

(THE OLD 22ND REGIMENT OF FOOT).

ON the outbreak of War in 1914, the 1st Battalion of the Cheshire Regiment (the old 22nd Regiment of Foot) was at Londonderry where it had been stationed for about two years. On August 5th it received orders to mobilise for active service.

The Reservists having joined the Colours and mobilisation having been completed, the battalion did about seven days hard field training, etc., as a "refresher" for those who had been absent from the Colours for some time.

On August 13th, orders were received for the battalion to parade in full marching order at 4 a.m. next morning.

Headed by the band, the troops marched to the Great Northern Station and, in two special trains proceeded to Belfast; the first train leaving at 5-10

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a.m. and the second thirty minutes later. Arriving at Belfast somewhere about 10 a.m. (August 14th) the battalion, amid cheers and waving of handkerchiefs by the spectators, marched to the docks, on the other side of the city, where it remained until late in the afternoon. About 3-30 p.m., the battalion, with two companies of the Norfolk Regiment, were ordered to board a different troopship from that originally intended. This proved a welcome change for the Cheshire battalion, as the boat, the S.S. Massillia, of the Anchor Line, had been provisioned for a voyage to India, and as an officer informed me " We fed like fighting cocks, and the regiment who were to have gone aboard this ship had to fend for themselves."

Speculation was rife as to where the battalion was bound for until each man was given a paper containing Lord Kitchener's message to each member of the British Expeditionary Force which they were ordered to carry with them in their Active Service Pay Books. The message ran :—

> " You are ordered abroad as a soldier of the King to help our French comrades against the invasion of a common enemy. You have to perform a task which will need your courage, your energy, your patience. Remember that the honour of the British Army depends on your individual conduct. It will be your duty not only to set an example of discipline and perfect steadiness under fire, but also to maintain the most friendly relations with those whom you are helping in this struggle.

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The operations in which you are engaged will, for the most part, take place in a friendly country, and you can do your own country no better service than in showing yourself in France and Belgium in the true character of a British soldier.

"Be invariably courteous, considerate, and kind. Never do anything likely to injure or destroy property, and always look upon looting as a disgraceful act. You are sure to meet with a welcome and to be trusted; your conduct must justify that welcome and that trust. Your duty cannot be done unless your health is sound. So keep constantly on your guard against any excesses. In this new experience you may find temptations both in wine and women. You must entirely resist both temptations, and, while treating all women with perfect courtesy, you should avoid any intimacy.

"Do your duty bravely.

"Fear God.

"Honour the King."

KITCHENER,

Field-Marshal."

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The following message from the King to his soldiers of the Expeditionary Force for France, was read to the men by the Commanding Officer:—

MESSAGE FROM THE KING.

Buckingham Palace.

"You are leaving home to fight for the safety and honour of my Empire.

"Belgium, whose country we are pledged to defend, has been attacked, and France is about to be invaded by the same powerful foe.

"I have implicit confidence in you, my soldiers. Duty is your watchword, and I know your duty will be nobly done.

"I shall follow your every movement with deepest interest and mark with eager satisfaction your daily progress; indeed your welfare will never be absent from my thoughts.

"I pray God to bless you and guard you and bring you back victorious."

GEORGE R.I.

9th August, 1914.

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So great was the delight of the men when they knew they were destined for France, that they gave cheer after cheer, every unit, from the youngest drummer boy, being eager to meet the foe.

Before leaving Londonderry, even the youngest drummer boys pleaded hard to accompany their older comrades to the front, but only two—W. F. Woods and Andrews—were allowed. As Woods was only 17 years of age, the Medical officer told him he was too young to go, but the youth pleaded so hard—even threatening to desert from the Regiment unless allowed to go—that the doctor gave way, saying " You are a plucky lad, you shall go."

A letter from an officer describes the passage :—

" *August* 16*th*, 1914.

We have had a very calm voyage up to now from 4 p.m. on Friday till now (8-45 a.m. Sunday) and now it is starting to roll and pitch a bit.

We have been awfully lucky in getting this boat, as she was loaded with three months provisions for a voyage to India when she was commandeered by the Government and consequently we have been having first-class food provided by the Company free, whereas the other three or four boats have had to fend for themselves. We have passed, and been called up, by several warships. This morning a French cruiser, destroyer, and three submarines came and examined us. The cruiser steamed round our stern, saw our number, and steamed off.

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It does seem extraordinary that there is any amount of British traffic on these waters and it is as safe as in peace time. I wonder what the little navyites think? There's been something exciting in the North Sea during the last week for certain, but no information or details are to hand."

When rounding the Lizard and Lands End shortly before sunset on 15th August the S.S. Massilla found herself in a procession of nine ships conveying troops. It was a glorious sight to see the swell of the Atlantic beating against the rugged rocks now gilded in golden haze by the setting sun. To starboard—towards the Scilly Islands, a solitary British cruiser beat up and down keeping silent watch and guard. She signalled the convoy and the sailors waved their arms; and as the line of crowded troopships passed by, each, in turn, dipped her ensign.

With the exception of a cavalry division which arrived a day or two earlier, the Cheshire battalion was one of the first to cross to France, arriving at Havre on Sunday, the 16th, about 3-30 p.m. After disembarking, the battalion remained at the Docks until about 7-30 p.m., when it commenced to trek up to No 8 Rest Camp, about six miles off, on the hills above Havre, arriving at the camp, a huge place at the top of a long and steep hill that evening about midnight. Owing to the steepness of the hill and the bad state of the roads (as it had been raining heavily on shore for four days) the transport had to take another way round, and even then was unable to get all the wagons to the

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summit. About 2 a.m., all the Brigade and regimental transport got stuck on the hill side, and the horses being released, were led up to the camp. After considerable labour, some confusion, and "language," the horses had not at that time got accustomed to, and as the camp was in total darkness, the horses were picketed and the men went to sleep among the corn stooks. Towards dawn something frightened the horses, and those of the Cheshire, with others, stampeded, one horse landing on the middle of the back of Private Jarvis of the regiment, who became paralysed, but ultimately recovered. Thus the battalion received its first serious casualty. Sergeant Pilgrim, signal sergeant, also became a casualty during the stampede. While unloading the transport from the hold of the vessel, the previous evening, a private had his hand injured by an S.A.A. cart.

There was a general impression that the battalion would remain at the camp for another night, but at 2-15 p.m. (Monday) orders were received to move off by train that night. At 11 p.m. the battalion paraded and marched to the station. About 2 a.m. they entrained for some unknown destination; after waiting in the train three hours they were told, about 5 a.m. (18th) that they were about to start on an eighteen hours' journey by rail. The weather was very hot, and the men were packed ten—with kits, etc.—in a carriage. At this there was naturally some grumbling, but it soon ceased when they saw the 2nd Dragoon Guards with horses, men, and kits, in cattle trucks.

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The train stopped at Rouen about 2 p.m., and the men were supplied with coffee ; another stop was made at Amiens and again at Bohain, where they heard that General Grierson had died on the train the previous morning. There were various rumours as to the cause of his death—that he had been shot by an enemy spy, that he had broken a blood vessel, and that he had died from heart failure. The battalion took this stoically though the officers knew that General Grierson was a severe loss at the outset, since he was looked upon as the British General who knew most about the German Army, and he had been appointed to the Command of the 2nd Army Corps of which the Cheshire battalion formed a part.

The Official Press Bureau made the following communication on Monday, August 17th :—

" General Grierson [1] died this morning of heart failure while travelling in the train."

At Bohain orders were received for the troops to

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1 Lieutenant-General Sir James Moncrieff Grierson, K.C.B., C.V.O., C.M.G., was born at Glasgow in the year 1859. He was the son of Mr. George Moncrieff Grierson by his marriage with Alleson, daughter of Mr. G. I. Walker, of Garemount, Dumbartonshire. Educated at Glasgow Academy and at the Royal Military Academy, he became lieutenant in the Royal Artillery in October, 1877, and gradually rose to be major-general in 1904, and lieutenant-general in 1910. No officer in the army had a better knowledge of the German Army. After serving as Brigade-major R.A., at Aldershot in 1895, and 1896, he was transferred to Berlin as Military Attache and remained there for four years. The body was taken from France to Scotland and was interred in the Necroplis, Glasgow, Saturday, August 22nd.

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detrain at Le Cateau, a few miles further on. An amusing incident took place at Busigny station. A number of people cheered the troops, and as the train pulled up charged down upon them asking for souvenirs, or their autographs, in return for fruit, etc. Lieutenant Elliot, of "A" Company, seeing this, said to the N.C.O. in the adjoining carriage "We must have some of that fruit!" and away he went, shortly afterwards returning with a quantity of fruit. The Lieutenant was popularly known to his brother officers by the name of W———. His sergeant, knowing this, laughingly asked him what name he had signed—wondering if he had signed his name as W——— or his correct name. Much to the sergeant's surprise and amusement the Lieutenant replied "Oh I signed it George Robey, the Cheshire Regiment!" These humorous little incidents did much to bind all ranks together, and relieved the monotony of a hot trying journey.

The troops detrained at Le Cateau where they arrived about 10 p.m. on Tuesday (August 18th). From there marched to billets allotted to them at Pommereuil, about five miles away, a quiet, peaceful, and pretty village, with old world arrangements. The battalion remained here three days to rest and get supplies. On the second day, Thursday (20th), Sir Charles Fergusson, who was in command of the 5th Division, paraded the Brigade by battalions, referred to its past history, and told them they were to move on the morrow (Friday). Addressing the Cheshire Battalion he spoke of its past records, its shooting and

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marching reputation on leaving for the front,[1] and concluded his speech by saying "Remember that if you have no ammunition, you have your bayonets; if your bayonets get broken you have your fists. Fight to the last man, and I myself will be with you to die in the last ditch if necessary; but remember! no surrender for the 5th Division," adding "Men, we are up against it!"

The 5th Division was composed as follows:—

Maj.-Gen. Sir C. Fergusson, Bt., C.B., in command.

13th Infantry Brigade, Brig.-Gen. Cuthbert, C.B.
- 2nd King's Own Scottish Borderers.
- 2nd West Riding Regiment.
- 1st Royal West Kent Regiment.
- 2nd Yorkshire Light Infantry.

14th Infantry Brigade, Brig.-Gen. Rolt, C.B.
- 2nd Suffolk Regiment.
- 1st East Surrey Regiment.
- 1st Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry.
- 2nd Manchester Regiment.

15th Infantry Brigade, Brig.-Gen. Count Gleichen, C.B., etc.
- 1st Norfolk Regiment.
- 1st Bedford Regiment.
- 1st Cheshire Regiment.
- 1st Dorset Regiment.

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1 The 1st Battalion, in 1911, became the best shooting regiment in the British Army—Home or Abroad, and in 1912-13 was one of the best—thanks to that keen lover of his Regiment, Major (afterwards Lieut.-Colonel) A. B. Gosset.

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Royal Artillery, Brig.-Gen. Hedlam, C.B.

XV., XVII., XXIII. Brigades Royal Field Artillery, 18 pounders.

Royal Engineers, Lt.-Col. Tullock.

7th and 59th Field Companies.

This, with the 3rd Division, formed the 2nd Army Corps.

Owing to the death of General Grierson, the King, on the recommendation of Field-Marshal Earl Kitchener, Secretary of State for War, approved (August 18th) the appointment of General Sir Horace Smith Dorrien to the Command of this Corps, and he was received in audience by the King at Buckingham Palace the same day.

In "The Times" of Wednesday, August 19th, 1914, appeared the following:—

"Sir H. Smith Dorrien's New Command. Successor to General Grierson."

"The King, on the recommendation of Field-Marshal Earl Kitchener, Secretary of State for War, has approved the appointment of General Sir Horace Smith Dorrien, G.C.B., D.S.O., to command an Army Corps of the British Expeditionary Force, in succession to Lieutenant-General Sir J. M. Grierson, K.C.B., C.V.O., C.M.G., Aide-de-Camp General to the King.

Sir Horace Smith Dorrien was received in audience by the King at Buckingham Palace yesterday."

About 3 a.m., on the 21st, the battalion received hurried orders to proceed by a forced march of 27 miles

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towards Mons. They arrived at Gommignies (15 miles) where they rested, and next morning marched to Dour (14 miles), Bois du Bossu (½ mile) and to Bossu where they arrived on Saturday, 22nd, about mid-day, and were billeted in some factories. During this march Lieut. Elliot, of "A" Company, organised singing, and made his best section march behind to prevent stragglers and cheer them up when, through the intense heat, they were almost exhausted. The heat was nothing at all compared to India, but, in serge, and 100 rounds of ball ammunition pressing against a man's ribs, with kits weighing over sixty pounds, it was a severe test for the reservists who composed more than half of the Battalion. During this march the faint sound of guns in action to the north-west could be heard. A number of the men fell out temporarily, but with the exception of four, all rejoined in billets. The Colonel and mounted officers walked to save their horses, and it was no uncommon sight to see officers carrying the kit, or rifle, of exhausted men in addition to his own kit weighing about fifty pounds.

This great feat is only what was to be expected of a regiment acknowledged to be one of the best marching regiments in the British Army. In the Oxford and Berkshire manœuvres of 1910 it marched thirty-three miles and fought for twelve hours; and in the Irish manœuvres of 1913 continued to hold the record for marching.

On crossing the Belgian frontier the battalion was cheered and given a great reception by the Belgian people.

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The following day, Sunday 23rd, about noon, the battalion (now with the Norfolks, kept in Divisional Reserve to the Dorsets and Bedfords, who were holding the railway at Wasmes) had orders to fall in—" A " and " B " Companies to go and dig trenches, and " C " and " D " Companies to advance and hold a cross roads about five miles ahead. The scouts of " C " and " D " under Captain Jackson, led the way and arrived at the position without hindrance. The scouts went on to try and locate the enemy and shortly came in touch with a German picket. This was immediately reported to Major Stapylton who was in command at the cross roads, and the scouts continued to keep in touch with the German picket until dawn, when, without being discovered they withdrew to Petit Wasmes where " A " and " B " Companies were digging trenches, reaching there about 3 a.m.

On leaving Bossu " A " and " B " Companies had scarcely got three-quarters of a mile when they heard heavy artillery fire on the left, and half an hour later could see shells breaking all along the line of the canal about three miles to the front. They halted in a cutting and a few German shells burst in neighbouring fields. The machine gun section, on the Sunday night, slept by a coal pit, to the rear of "A" and " B " Companies, joining the battalion early next morning.

The men having started to dig trenches for the battalion, Captain Shore sent Captain E. C. Jolliffe, the Company Sergt.-Major (J. W. T. Francis), and about fifteen men, to reconnoitre to the front. They had

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scarcely proceeded three hundred yards when two shrapnel shells broke just over their heads, and the men quickly scattered. Captain Jolliffe and the Company Sergeant-Major, to get a better view, got behind a big railway embankment and were scanning the country in front with their field glasses when six high explosive shells came screaming over the embankment too close to be comfortable, for had they raised their hands they could have reached them. The party then returned to where they had left their main body, reported to the senior officer (Captain Shore), and went on with the trench digging, while the air was alive with British aeroplanes buzzing about. One more venturesome than the rest appeared just over the trench, but was immediately fired on by the German guns on the other side of the canal. It was pretty to see the shrapnel bursting round it, but it got away without receiving, so far as could be seen, any damage. It brought the trench diggers under fire, but luckily no one was injured. They had to man the trenches for about one hour, after which they continued digging until it was dark.

A vivid sunset gave colour to a strange scene. To the north were several villages ablaze. Everywhere in trench, or covered position, were lines of eager, anxious men standing to their arms awaiting that first great collision of armies with a confidence for which (could they have forseen) there was not much cause.

About midnight (23/24th August) a ragged firing of rifles disturbed the sleep of such few who could take repose in the trenches. Two thousand Germans were

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reported to be approaching the position of "A" and "B" Companies, but did not appear. Throughout the night local inhabitants from Hornu continued passing through the lines to safety.

During the night Lieutenant C. A. K. Matterson and Corporal Tunnicliffe went as scouts across the Mons canal to the enemy lines and brought back useful information. Dawn on the 24th revealed a weirdly beautiful scene. Our aeroplanes were reconnoitring, each ringed with bursting shrapnel, tinged pink by the rising sun. A long cloud low on the horizon was reported to be a Zeppelin. Several villages were still ablaze to the north. Guns and gunners peered forth from behind slag-heaps and cover. To the west a church steeple was burning, having been hit by a German shell. Our field guns opened fire overhead, bodies of troops withdrew through the position, apparently to clear the front, and all seemed to give promise of a great battle.

The trenches were completed by 7 a.m., much to the satisfaction of the men who, little knowing what they were up against, felt they would have some cover from which to hold up the German horde. In the meantime a staff officer (Major Wetherall, Brigade Major, 15th Infantry Brigade) in a fast motor car delivered to the C.O., Colonel Boger, a despatch, ordering him to hand over his trenches to the Manchester Regiment as soon as it arrived, and to proceed to Dour railway station and to report to Divisional Headquarters.

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The Manchester Regiment arrived about 8 a.m., and took over the trenches and position generally.

Colonel Boger went to their C.O., Lt.-Colonel James, who was standing on a small hill in rear of the position. From there they saw masses of the enemy on the horizon, and one of our heavy guns opened fire.

After being relieved, Colonel Boger marched the battalion away to Dour railway station and reported his arrival to Sir Charles Fergusson, the Divisional Commander. The men thought it strange they were retiring before a battle, and believed they were falling back to be used in a counter attack. The inhabitants were much alarmed on seeing the troops retiring, but were reassured when told they were coming back. Nobody visualised that a general retirement was in actual progress.

While they were at Dour, Lord E. Gleichen made a speech to the battalion, somewhat similar to that of General Fergusson at Pommereuil, adding—"A German is no good with fists in a tight corner." Shortly afterwards orders were given for the Cheshire and Norfolk battalions to make a counter attack under the command of Colonel Ballard, who was the senior Colonel. The battalions were drawn up preparatory to attacking —the Norfolk on the right, and the Cheshire on the left. After a period of waiting for orders to move forward, Colonel Ballard informed Colonel Boger that the orders for a counter-attack had been annulled, and that Colonel Boger was to follow him with his battalion to another position some distance to the left, on the north

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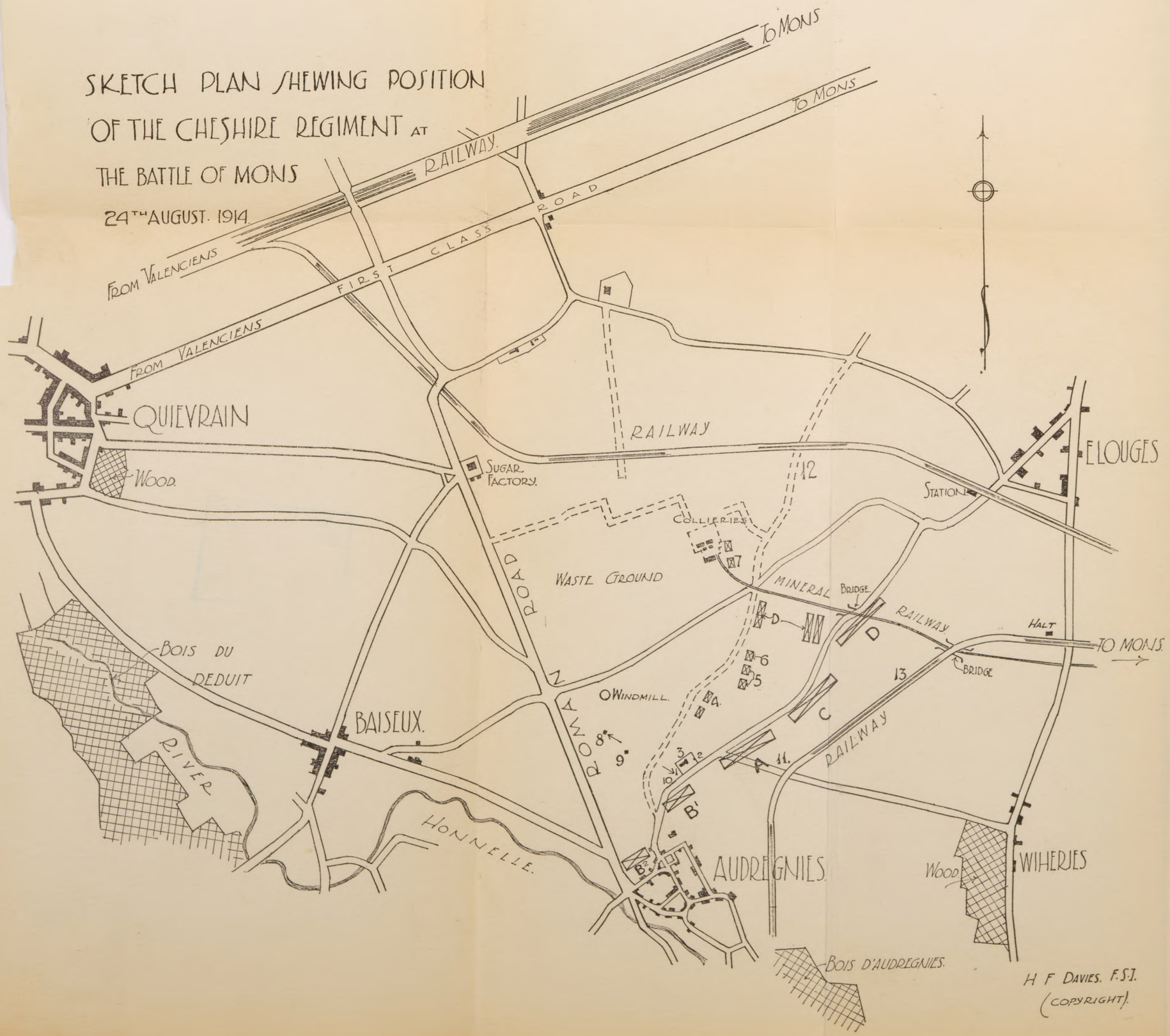
SKETCH PLAN SHEWING POSITION OF THE CHESHIRE REGIMENT AT THE BATTLE OF MONS

24TH AUGUST. 1914.



REFERENCE

A—" A " Company Capt. Dyer.

B1—Half " B " Company Captain Jolliffe.

B2—Half " B .. Company Capt. Shore.

C—" C " Company Capt. Dugmore.

D—" D " Company Capt. Jones.

1 & 2—Machine Guns.

3—Deserted Cottage.

4—Two Platoons of " A " Coy. advanced—150 yards from road forming firing line.

5—Two Platoons of " C " Coy. under Capt. Jackson advanced 300 yards from road.

6—One Platoon of " C " Coy., afterwards taken up by Capt. Dugmore from road to reduce the gap between his firing line and " D " Company.

7—Two Platoons of " D " Coy under Capt. Rich placed in a cart track on either side of a factory at the end of the mineral railway.

1-8—Bayonet charge by Capt. Dyer's party. Germans had advanced as far as **8**.

9—Capt. Joliffe wounded in the shoulder on his return for more men to sustain the charge.

10—Capt. Joliffe's leg shattered in two places just before reaching his reserves on the road for more men.

11—Place where Lieut. Campbell was killed.

12—Coal mines occupied by half company Norfolk Regt.

13—Position of last stand of small detachment of Cheshires and Norfolks prior to retirement to St. Waast.

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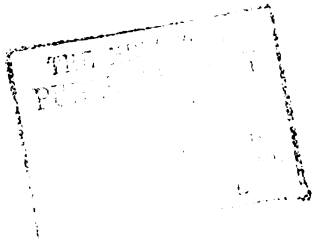

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side of Elouges. On the battalion's arrival at the ground indicated (after an unavoidable flank march across the enemy's front) orders were received by Colonel Boger to take up a position as quickly as possible in prolongation of Colonel Ballard's left as far as a spot indicated on the map, close to Audregnies,—rather more than a mile of front for the Cheshire battalion,—and to protect the road against an advance of the enemy, at the same time remarking " You will be all right ! our cavalry are out in front of us." The Cheshire battalion came under fire immediately it arrived on the ground.

The march from Bois du Bossu to the Elouges-Audregnies position was about six miles over cobble stones and rough roads. As hardly anyone had slept for twenty-four hours and all had made great exertions, it was for many the hardest march the battalion had up to that time done. It is very remarkable that, feeling confident of a battle, not a man fell out. So tired were they that, on halting under fire, a soldier in " A " Company fell down and slept instantly on an exposed bank beaten by German bullets.

About 11-30 a.m., Colonel Boger proceeded along the road dropping companies at intervals to divide the distance in the manner Colonel Ballard had done with the Norfolk battalion.

Colonel Boger had three companies on the road with him (less one platoon previously lent as escort to some guns at Petit Wasmes). The fourth, " B " Company, under Captain Shore, was acting as a right

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flank guard to the column on the road, and rejoined the line on the left by Audregnies Village. It was when marching in column of route to take up its position that the battalion received its first casualty in action. Company Sergeant-Major Meachin, who was just behind Captain Shore, got hit on the head by a spent bullet and had to receive attention.

There was no time for a proper reconnaissance of the position, or for the making of trenches. The road edge gave cover for supports; firing lines had to lie down the gentle slope towards the enemy for a field of fire and view.

Captain Shore with half of "B" Company, took up a position near a farm house (which the men called the cloisters), on the extreme left of the line. Here there was more cover, but less easily communicated with under fire. The other half of "B" Company, under Captain Jolliffe, had his right on the left of the (so-called) deserted cottage (along the Elouges-Audregnies-Angre Road); and beyond, "A" Company, Captain (now Major) Dyer in command, occupied a front of two hundred yards, with its left on the cottage. The firing line was about 150 yards north of the road, in the corn field and the supports on the road itself. "C" Company, Captain Dugmore in command, and "D" Company under Captain Rae Jones, prolonged the line to the right of "A" Company. The companies had considerable gaps between them, and owing to the undulating ground were unable to see each other. Each company placed a firing line in the cornfield in front,

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which gently sloped from the sunken road. To the extreme right were two companies of the Norfolk Regiment, with their right resting on the railway from Elouges to Quievrain.

Captain Rich, in command of the right half of "D" Company, took up a position on the extreme right of the battalion and placed his men at five paces interval. The company had hardly taken up its position before it came under heavy shell fire, and several casualties occurred, including Lieutenant Bolton (posted from the 3rd Battalion Special Reserve) who was in command of No. 13 Platoon and who was wounded in the leg; and Pte. F. Thorpe who was severely wounded.

The two machine guns, under the command of Lieutenant (now Major) Randall, were placed on the main road, one on either side of the deserted cottage (between the right of "B" Company and the left of "A" Company) using the low bank in front as a bit of cover. German aeroplanes hovered above to locate the machine gun positions, and on sighting them, immediately re-directed their course to the German lines without any damage, as they were too high to be reached by our gun fire. Having got into position, the machine gun section received its first order "Gun numbers up," and at a range of 1,800 yards played on the Germans as they developed in two direct columns from the wood immediately south of Quievrain, and the upper part of the Bois de Déduit, with excellent effect. The shells from the enemy's guns were soon bursting all about the section, and one of the guns was soon

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fired out of action. No matter how many of the enemy were shot down, others took their places, so superior were the enemy's numbers. [1]

The 119th Battery R.F.A., acting in close support of the infantry, was halted in rear of " A " Company—just south of Elouges ; " L " Battery R.H.A. was two to three miles away on the Angre road, north-east of Audregnies ; and the 4th Dragoon Guards, and the 9th Lancers, under General de Lisle, were in Audregnies to where they, with the 18th Hussars, had retired about 11-30 a.m., from the railway embankment. The General had already sent, in response to an urgent appeal for support from General Fergusson, the 18th Hussars to the high ground along the Quievrain Elouges road where they dismounted and did excellent service.

" D " Company, under Captain Jones, advanced about three hundred yards from the road and took up a position in the cornfield, leaving the C.Q.M.S. with the two transport men and the ammunition mules on the road, in rear of the last platoon.

About 12 o'clock noon Captain Dugmore ordered

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1 It is recorded by Major A. Corbett Smith, in his " Retreat from Mons " that the actual approximate numbers on August 22nd were :—

	ALL RANKS.	FIELD GUNS.	MACHINE GUNS.
British	80,000	300	100
French	240,000	960	288
German	812,000	3,016	936
Excess German strength over Franco-British ...	492,000	1,756	548

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his second in command, Captain Jackson, to move forward with two platoons and take up a position about three hundred yards in advance of the road in a corn field that had been cut (the sheaves standing) with a field of turnips on either side, he himself remaining with the other two platoons on or near the road. Seeing a considerable gap between Captain Jackson's right and "D" Company's left, Captain Dugmore, to correct this, took one of the two supporting platoons forward and occupied the intervening ground. While this deployment was taking place the Germans opened a heavy shrapnel fire along the whole of the battalion position at a range of 2,000 yards. It was kept up for about three hours but did little damage as, for the most part, the shrapnel went over the Cheshire position and burst all along the railway some distance behind.

Owing to the configuration of the ground little could be seen of the adjoining companies. About eight hundred yards to the right front of "C" Company was a coal mine occupied by two platoons of the Norfolk Regiment.

During this time Captain Dugmore sent men to try and get in touch with the adjoining companies, Battalion Headquarters and his ammunition mule, but none of them returned. He then decided, as the orders were for the battalion to hold the position at all costs, to preserve his ammunition, lie still, and await the advance of the German infantry. As there was no cover, casualties kept on occurring. It was here, early in the action, that Captain Jackson was seriously

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wounded by a shell which killed Sergeant Walden and a private. The Captain was shot through the right shoulder and left knee, and received two shrapnel wounds across the right ribs. One of the men took off his equipment and gave him a drink of water from his water bottle.

It was difficult to see from the road what was going on in front, as the tremendous volume of enemy shell and rifle fire poured on to this crest of road kept one very close to whatever little cover could be found. C.Q.M.S. Pitt (" D " Company) passed word along to Lieutenant Campbell—who was, at that time, the only officer with whom he was in contact—as to the advisability of taking the mules into the open when the company advanced. Before any reply could be received a section of the 119th Battery R.F.A. galloped up the road at a terrific pace and on reaching the rear of " D " Company transport received the full force of concentrated shrapnel. The next moment the roadway was a mass of struggling horses, men, and gun-limbers, piled on top of each other. In the midst of this " D " Company mules stampeded, and with other loose animals, dashed down the sloping road. As it was necessary to recover them as soon as possible, the C.Q.M.S., and the two transport men, cautiously made their way after the mules. At the bottom of the hill the mineral railway crossed the road diagonally by a fairly wide bridge, and here under what shelter it could give, were gathered together in confusion loose horses, wounded men, stretcher bearers, etc., and here they found the mules. C.Q.M.S. Lyons of " C " Company

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who had had a similar experience with his mules, was also here. After getting some little order out of chaos, they started back up the hill, so as to again get in touch with their companies. The shell fire, mingled with the "zip" of the rifle bullet, was terrific. Halfway up the slope they were met by a staff officer shouting that "the road must be kept clear." He refused to allow the Cheshire men to proceed, and ordered them back. A captain of the Norfolks with a small party appeared on the scene. Pitt, Lyons, and half a dozen Cheshire stretcher-bearers and company transport attached themselves to him. Hearing that the enemy had already reached the road, they retired to the railway (Audregnies—Halt) in rear of the position the Company originally held on the Elouges road, and made a stand on the railway lines which they held until forced to retire—which they did successfully, arriving at St. Waast that night.

Seeing the havoc played by the German artillery, and two German columns advancing, the one from the direction of Quievrain on the north side, and Bois de Déduit and Baisieux on the south-east side—towards Audregnies—De Lisle, about 1 p.m., ordered the two mounted regiments to stop the German advance at all costs. A trooper galloped down the road shouting "The Cavalry Brigade will rally behind the wood!" (Audregnies). Almost immediately two squadrons of the 9th Lancers were seen making their way from the right of the village, and two troops of the 4th Dragoon Guards from the left. They came on to the road and galloped across the corn field, on the left of the machine

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guns, the Lancers in column of squadrons and the 4th Dragoon Guards echeloned to their left rear, and made for the enemy intending to take the enemy's advance in flank. In doing so they speared several German scouts who were behind cover of the corn stooks. On they galloped, and were within five hundred yards of their objective when they were held up by wire entanglements (dividing the two stubble fields in which the corn stooks were standing) which they could not break through, and so fierce was the German shell fire—from at least nine batteries—that they were held up and obliged to retire. This they did in as perfect order as if they were on ordinary manœuvres. Some dismounted and took up a position near the sugar factory; others wheeled to the right; and the remnant which escaped under Captain Francis Grenfell took cover behind a coal mine near the mineral railway, to the right front of "D" Company's advanced platoons. They dismounted and opened fire on the advancing Germans while the led horses were withdrawn to a safe place, afterwards retiring through the position held by "C" Company, to the left, through which a number of riderless horses had stampeded immediately following the charge.

The enemy then tried a supporting movement further south by Marchipont, but were checked by "D" and "E" batteries, and the 5th Dragoon Guards who, fortunately, had just come up from the 1st Cavalry Brigade.

Although the cavalry were dreadfully cut up by

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shell fire, it did—with the rapid fire of the battalion—what was asked of it, and frustrated Von Kluck's enveloping movement for the time being.

Far to the left, however, on the horizon, the enemy were seen moving and preparing for a second attack. Colonel Boger sent a cyclist down the road to Colonel Ballard with the Norfolk Regiment, to let him know of the movement on their left, and sent two platoons, under Captain Rich of " D " Company, from the firing line to reinforce that flank, as it was threatened at close range.

Rich advanced his men by sections to a position about half a mile forward where position was taken up in a cart track. This formed a natural trench, but was a poor fire position as a large colliery stood almost opposite their fronts. Rich then posted his men on either side of the building ; No. 14 Platoon on the left at ten paces interval, and 13 Platoon moved over to the right and linked up with the firing line of the Norfolk Regiment under the command of a Major who was shortly afterwards severely wounded.

As the cyclist sent by Colonel Boger to Colonel Ballard had not returned, three others were sent in succession and not one of them returned. The Colonel, about 2-30 p.m., seeing that matters were coming to a crisis, left the road and accompanied by the adjutant (Capt. V. R. Tahourdin), proceeded towards the firing line to get a better view and find out what was happening. On reaching " C " Company he told Captain Dugmore to keep close in touch with his left, as he

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feared the enemy were trying to get round that flank, and that it might be necessary for him to retire. Bearing in mind that the order was " to hold on at all costs," and being under the impression that they would receive support later on, Dugmore said he thought they could hold their own and that they hoped " to get some of their own back," when the time came for the enemy to advance, and he pointed out to the Colonel that some of the Norfolks were still in position to his right front. He could see nothing of what was happening on his left.

At about 3 p.m. the Germans launched their massed infantry attack from the Bois Déduit through two openings, and great pressure was brought to bear on the east flank of the Norfolks. The shrapnel fire still continuing, they advanced to within eight hundred yards of the battalion. Their main object was directed against the front of "A" and " C " Companies. It was then seen that the enemy were trying to cut them off on the left flank. They managed to get a machine gun behind the old windmill at the side of which were a few trees and a small thin hedge, but our machine gun at a range of 900 yards played on this without reply. " C " Company opened fire when the enemy were about eight hundred yards from its front. When they arrived at about five hundred yards, in addition to the fire coming from the front, rifle and machine gun bullets were coming from the left front. Captain Dugmore then formed the men in his immediate vicinity into two parties and started the retirement, he himself remaining behind with a few men until the Germans were about three hundred yards away.

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Proceeding along the sunken road and arriving near the deserted cottage in rear of the left platoon of "A" Company, Lieutenant (now Captain) C.A.K. Matterson and Lieutenant Campbell saw one of the S.A.A. horses, named "Trotter," which had been badly wounded by shell fire writhing in agony. Matterson asked Campbell to put it out of its misery, and this he did with a shot from his revolver. Hearing that the left was hard pressed, Matterson said to Campbell "Let's go and support the left." Matterson led the way, with Campbell about a yard behind him, and in passing an exposed gap, where the bank was low and exposed to fire, Campbell—a most popular young officer—was shot through the head by machine gun bullets. He was temporarily buried near to where he fell, and a few days later removed to the cemetery at Audregnies.

Colonel Boger, looking beyond the right flank, discovered that the Germans now held the position previously occupied by the Norfolks, who had retired. While making these observations he was wounded in the hand by a shot fired from about the railway line where the Norfolks had been. The position was soon enveloped on both flanks and appeared hopeless.

Captain Dugmore, seeing he could expect no support and would be cut off, retired with a small party and reached a bridge over a railway cutting where he had a better view. About 150 yards in rear of this bridge he saw 2nd-Lieutenant Groves (now a Major in the Scots Guards) and about ten men taking cover in a ditch. He ordered them to come forward, lined them

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out on the railway cutting, and opened fire. The field of fire was poor, so he then ordered Lieutenant Groves to take this party and offer further resistance from a house about three hundred yards to his right rear. (From information subsequently obtained it appears that this house was occupied by Germans and therefore Lieutenant Groves and his party continued to retire as best they could).

Captain Dugmore remained on the bridge and collected about eight men, a few of them being Norfolks, who were running along the railway, and here offered their final resistance.

The bank of the mineral railway gave cover to the advanced platoons of " D " Company, and a good target was obtained, as the enemy were advancing in close formation and firing from the hip. Here they held the Germans—who thought from their rapid fire there was a large force—at bay. Unfortunately the platoons had to cease fire so that the remnant of the cavalry, (who after the charge had been sheltering near some red sand hills in rear of the mineral railway which the enemy guns had shelled so effectively that horses and men were being sacrificed) could get through.

Captain Rich, in the meantime, had sent men back to see what was happening to the battalion. But in no case did any return. As casualties were freely happening about this time, and as the line had meanwhile become enfiladed, they retired to a fosse or dry ditch about one hundred yards to the rear. The half company of Norfolks still held on by the coal mines. They were

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still in doubt as to what was happening to the battalion, and could see or hear nothing of the two supporting platoons (under Captain Jones) left nearer the road. Shortly afterwards, however, they received orders to retire—every man for himself. Captain Rich retired to the right with No. 14 Platoon and eventually escaped. Sergeant Blackwell and about twenty-five men and the remainder of the half company of the Norfolk Regiment who occupied the coal mine, commanded by a 2nd-Lieutenant, retired through the cornfield until they reached the road.

The enemy were now advancing without any severe opposition. The men formed up on the road, and in endeavouring to find headquarters, halted in a wood, and were arranging where they had better make for when the enemy suddenly surrounded them. After a short resistance they had to surrender. Up to this time nothing had been seen or heard of the other half of " D " Company. The men were marched to the German Headquarters at a large hotel where they were questioned and afterwards placed in a Belgian gaol. Early next morning they were taken to a church where they were amazed to find a considerable number of the battalion, including—of " D " Company alone—sixty-two rank and file, 2nd-Lieutenant Bolton, and Lieutenant Randall.

About 5-30 p.m., as " A " Company was in the act of retiring, the men were fired on by two machine guns placed in a dip in the ground. Captain Dyer called on the men near him to attack. Lieutenant Matterson

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who was on the sunken road close behind Dyer, hearing the order, with four men got through the wire and joined the front line. Dyer gave the order " Advance and enfilade the enemy," and the four officers—Captains Dyer, Jolliffe and Massey and Lieutenant Matterson—and thirty men of " A " and right half of " B " Companies, made a gallant attack with the bayonet in the hope of covering the retirement of the remainder. Seeing this, the advanced Germans turned and made for their supports. The party advanced from the left of the deserted cottage and had reached the dead ground (about eight hundred yards, on which there were a number of slag heaps) on the left of the windmill, when Jolliffe was brought to the ground by a shot through the shoulder. On getting up he found they had only ten men, and asked Captain Dyer if he should go back and get more. In doing so he got within one hundred yards of his base, and was in the act of throwing himself to the ground when a shot shattered his leg in two places. Captain Massey was shot through the forearm. Jolliffe lay where he fell until about 6-30 p.m., when the medical officer visited the various casualties. The brothers Spencer rushed to Jolliffe's assistance, improvised two splints for the use of the M.O., and remained with him. Captain Dyer was severely wounded in the foot and thigh. The men speak with the greatest admiration of the bravery of these two officers, [1] also of the conspicuous gallantry of Corporal Fleet and Privates Riley

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1 Captains Dyer and Jolliffe eventually received the M.C. for their gallant conduct.

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and Drake. This gallant counter-attack—practically a forlorn hope—was the means by which many wounded and other men were enabled to retire to the woods in the rear.

Brigadier-General Sir J. E. Edmunds, in his Official History of the War, referring to this counter-attack, says: "And during this short respite the opportunity was taken to draw off a small part of the battalion across country to Audregnies Wood which they reached under heavy fire thence making their way to Athis. Then the Germans, seeing how few were their assailants, returned to the attack and there was nothing left for the remainder of the Cheshire, a mere handful though they were, but to fight to the last. They had still ammunition and could keep up a rapid fire, and though by this time separated into at least three groups, they continued to defend themselves desperately until nearly 7 p.m. Then at last surrendered and, overwhelmed on all sides, they laid down their arms; of the main body on the Audregnies road only forty remained unwounded."

Lieutenant Elliot, with a platoon of "A" Company on the Elouges—Audregnies road, had his attention drawn to a wounded man—Pte. Millett—about one hundred yards away, trying to get back to the road but unable to do so although he managed to get occasional shots at the enemy. Seeing that he was completely exhausted, the Lieutenant rushed forward, dropped by his side, unfastened his equipment, turned him over on to his (the Lieutenant's) back, and under heavy fire crawled back to the sunken road where, on reaching

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the bank he (the Lieutenant) got shot through both feet. His men removed his boots and bandaged his feet, and he again took up his sword and a rifle and resumed his position with the platoon. Seeing the position was hopeless, he ordered his platoon to retire, but was unable through loss of blood to retire with them, so he crawled to the deserted cottage [1] where several men had taken cover. As the rear wall of the cottage (facing the enemy) had no openings through which to fire, the occupants decided to await the approach of the enemy, intending to fire on them as they entered the cottage. The door was slowly opened and they were about to fire when, instead of the Germans, they saw Corporal Murdock leading a horse in. As he entered he said " Take care of this horse ! they have killed the other one but I am damned if they are going to get this !" He then walked out of the cottage, saying " They can kill me but not my horse." This horse was one attached to the S.A.A. wagon with ammunition for the machine guns.

Owing to the hail of shell the remaining machine gun which was placed at the right rear of the cottage was useless, as the gunner, 9327 Pte. Taylor dared not expose himself or the gun owing to the heavy hail of shell from the enemy. [2] Lieutenant Elliot therefore ordered

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1 It was found later that the cottage was not actually deserted as the Belgian family who occupied it were afterwards found by the Germans hiding in the well. During the retirement this cottage is sometimes referred to as the farm house.

2 The German machine gunners were protected by a shield in front of the guns, but the British had no protection.

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Taylor to bring the gun into the cottage. The breech block was removed, and the gun made unusable. In the meantime Elliot tore up his maps into small fragments and threw them in out-of-the-way places in the cottage. He then made several attempts to break the blade of his sword so that it should not be surrendered to the enemy—as it had been carried by his father and his grandfather—but this he was unable to do before the enemy surrounded the cottage and a party with fixed bayonets demanded the surrender of the few Cheshire. Elliot refused to surrender his sword except to an officer. Captain Rogge of the 72nd Regiment [1] came forward and received Elliot's sword, but seeing the weak condition he was in through loss of blood, returned it to him. While Elliot lay on the side of the road the 4th German Corps passed by. No wonder most of our casualties were owing to shell fire; the number of heavy and machine guns was enormous. Every soldier speaks of the heavy German gun fire, and the speedy way they got the accurate range of any fresh position. The long-range rifle firing was just the reverse and ineffective. Many of our men remarked "They could'nt hit a man if he was placed at the end of a rifle." The German infantry did not sight their rifles and fired from the hip.

Sergeant Meachin, having recovered from the wound received earlier in the afternoon, and looking for his platoon, saw a number of men going back. They told

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1 Captain Rogge was killed later in the war.

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him the order was given to retire. Colonel Boger came up and enquired from the sergeant where the order came from to retire; nobody knew. A cavalry officer galloped down the road and when he was passing by, the Colonel asked him if they were cut off. He pointed to the direction of the railway and galloped on. Seeing the position was enveloped on both flanks and part of the rear, the Colonel told the men on the road to retire half right, pointing out the direction towards Audregnies Wood. While following the men he received a bullet through the right foot from the left flank, and almost immediately after was shot in the right side.

The Germans having got within one hundred yards of the road, the remnant of the battalion had to retire fighting. To relieve the pressure, various counter-attacks with the bayonet were made. This only checked the enemy for a short time, but it enabled many of that wing to escape in various directions. Sergeant Meachin was hit with shrapnel which, rebounding from the branch of a tree, hit him as it fell.

About 4 p.m., the support platoon (No. 9) of " C " Company, which had remained on, or near, the road (when the three other platoons formed the advanced firing line) owing to the close proximity of the enemy and intensity of their shell and rifle fire, retired immediately behind their original position where an embankment afforded better cover. This was carried out by a few men at a time. Here, those who remained, joined by others who were retiring from the left, kept up rapid fire on the closely advancing enemy. Captain E. R.

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Jones of " D " Company came up and asked what they were doing. Sergeant Raynor, 4277, explained the position. Almost immediately the observer, Pte. Wood, 9887, reported " The people on our right rear are retiring." Captain Jones then asked for someone to go and find out why they were retiring. Lieutenant K. T. Frost said " Right Sir! I will go." Captain Jones at once ordered the men to retire, and this was done in excellent order across the road on to the high ground, where they had many casualties. In making for a large wood in rear of the road they were enfiladed by machine gun fire. Before they entered the wood it was reconnoitred by Raynor during which he exchanged shots with a German patrol. When he reported to Captain Jones it was decided to pass through the wood in single file and gain the open on the other side. While doing so they were joined by drummers Blake and Hogan, 9696. About a dozen of the men remained in the wood including Pte. Reeves, who eventually escaped; and the others made for a cattle kraal, and from there turned quarter right to gain the shelter of a belt of trees. In doing so Captain Jones discovered the enemy hiding behind some corn stooks. He fired at them with his revolver and they immediately replied with a volley, killing Captain Jones and drummer Hogan [1] and wounding Corporal Crooks [2] and Private Garrard [3].

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1 Hogan shot through the left temple.

2 Crooks wounded in the hand.

3 Garrard shot through the stomach and died shortly afterwards.

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Pte. Woods ran back and hid in the cornfield, and Sergeant Raynor and L/C'poral Blake (who was unarmed) ran for the belt of trees. When the Germans (who belonged to the 66th Infantry regiment) [1] discovered there were only two, they rushed on them with fixed bayonets, but the German officer waved them aside with his sword and the two Cheshire were compelled to surrender. They were roughly handled and searched, and Raynor's maps were taken from him. The German officer then ordered Raynor and Blake to bring in the killed and wounded. They found one man was missing which was Woods who had escaped. It was then seen that the Germans had already secured one prisoner, Lance-Corporal Woods, 9th Lancers, whom they had trussed up and tied to a tree. The bodies were carried across a field, to the right side of the road entering Wiheries, where the Germans dug a grave. Raynor was asked which way they should lay the bodies in the grave—heads to the east, or west; the burial service was said by Pte. Randle, a reservist, at one time corporal in "G" Company, 2nd battalion, and the Germans fired three volleys over the grave.

Captain Jones's wrist watch and revolver were buried with him (he did not carry a sword at the time) and the men's rifles were broken and, with the equipment, were placed in the same grave. A German pioneer made a small cross, on which Raynor wrote the name of

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1 The 66th Regiment were attached to the 13th Infantry Brigade, the VII. Division, IV Corps.

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Captain Jones and Hogan, and placed his own initials below. While this was going on a strong patrol of Ulhans passed by.

Captain Jones's silver match box and some money were placed in his haversack and handed to L/Corporal Blake, who, on arrival at the church where all the prisoners were congregated, handed it to Sergeant Raynor. The Sergeant then offered it to the Adjutant (Captain Tahourdin) who refused to take charge of it. The money was eventually spent on food for several of the men interred in Germany who agreed to refund the amount when they returned home. The match box was successfully hidden by Raynor who, on being interned in Holland, handed it to Captain Lee Stewart so that it might be forwarded to Mrs. Jones.

The only men present when Captain Jones and drummer Hogan were shot, were Sergeant Raynor, Corporal Crooks, L/Corporal Blake, Pte. Garrard and Pte. Woods. A few others, including Pte. Randle and Lance-Corporal Woods, 9th Lancers, were present at the burial.

Pte Woods remained in the wheatfield until it was quite dark when he crawled to the village of Wiheries and remained on the outskirts till daylight when he went to a public-house where they gave him some civilian clothes and hid him in a house in the village.

Woods eventually found his way to England and reported at the Castle, Chester, March 5th, 1915, where he made a statement to Colonel Neville, then in command of the Depot, in which he said :—" Two days later

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[August 26th] the people at the public-house removed the Captain's body out of the grave, dug the grave deeper, washed and covered the body with a sheet, and re-buried it, the daughter of the publican retaining the Captain's wrist watch as a souvenir. The small cross on the grave was exchanged for a larger one, about four feet high." [1].

Sergeant Raynor, after being interned as a prisoner of war in Germany and later interned in Holland, rejoined the Regiment and was eventually granted the D.C.M. for his good work at Mons.

Drummer Blake returned to the 3rd Battalion with which he served in 1919.

Captain Shore, with half of " B " Company on the extreme left of the line, was the only Captain left. He relates how he was ordered to occupy the farm house on the extreme left and act as support to the other three companies which were rapidly extending to the right. Owing to the rolling formation of the ground he soon lost touch with them and could not see what was going on. He heard heavy firing all along the line, and eventually a staff officer told him to retire to the rear of the village (Audregnies) " Where we are going to rally." On arriving there no rallying point could be found, neither were there any troops except a few wounded of the 4th Dragoon Guards. The position was being shelled so heavily that they continued the retirement. Nobody knew where they were going, but they still

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1 Captain Jones was finally buried in the cemetery at Wiheries.

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marched on, and much to the satisfaction of all, they were joined by Colonel Ballard, the Norfolk Regiment, who was in command of the two Battalions—Norfolk and Cheshire. They shortly struck a column on a metalled road, fell in and marched on with it, and within a few miles of Bavai came across several wounded men of the regiment including Sergeants Parry and Tomlinson.

Another small body were unable to get away from Audregnies including 9461 Dmr. C. Baker who carried the Miniature Colour. Seeing the position was hopeless, Baker rushed into a house in the village, climbed the staircase, and under the eaves hid the Colour behind some straw. By signs he begged the occupiers not to give the Colour to anyone but an Englishman. Baker had just got clear of the house when the Germans entered the village and took the little band of Cheshire prisoners. (See account of the Miniature Colour).

The German officers were zealous in collecting the rifles, and demanded information as to where the machine guns had been hidden. They could not believe the rapid fire was the splendid work of the men with the rifle. General Smith Dorrien later said " Our men were the finest trained army that had ever entered the field. They learned that rapid handling of the rifle by which they could fire fifteen rounds a minute, a thing unknown in the German army."

The wounded lay where they fell until about 6-30 p.m. when a doctor attached to the battalion was allowed to go out and attend to them, and most of the officers

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were carried to one place. The wounded lay out in the open until about 7 a.m. next morning when they were removed to a Belgian Red Cross Hospital where most of them remained about three weeks before being taken to Mons.

On reaching the Pensionnat St. Bernard (Audregnies) where most of the wounded officers were taken, Elliot had to part with his sword, the Prioress, a dear old French lady, saying it was against the rules of the Convent to admit any instrument of warfare. Seeing that he was so attached to his sword she arranged with the Parish Secretary—M. Georges Dupont—to take charge of it until such time as it could be returned to him. [1]

Captain Jackson was not so fortunate as the other officers. He was left lying on the field where he fell. Three German soldiers eventually came along and gave him some water. One of them took his maps and book-work, and not satisfied with these, also took his watch from his wrist. Just as it was getting dark a German Doctor with an orderly came along, bandaged his wounds, and covered him with straw. Next morning (Tuesday) German ambulances passed nearby, but he could not make them hear, and he lay on the field until about 2 p.m., when some civilians found him and took him to a hospital in Audregnies where he found several wounded brother officers including Captains

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1 Lieutenant (now Captain) Elliot was eventually awarded the D.S.O. He visited the battlefield October, 1919, and regained possession of his sword which he now wears on parade.

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Dyer and Jolliffe, Lieutenant Elliot and Lieutenant Gallagher of the 4th Dragoon Guards.

One feels some diffidence in reciting individual acts of bravery where all behaved so well, but it is a duty to mention a few special cases. Colonel D. C. Boger, in his official report states :—" Major Chetwynd Stapylton, Captain Dyer, Captain Jolliffe and Lieutenant K. T. Frost behaved under fire as if there were no bullet or shell." To these should be added the names of Colonel D. C. Boger and Lieutenant C. A. K. Matterson.

Colonel Boger passed through a hail of fire to get relief for his right flank which was being entirely sacrificed to the enemy. When the gallant Colonel was shot through the right side and foot he tried to raise himself but was unable to. While he was lying in the field three or four of his men came up, gave him water, and carried several wounded men near to where he lay. The unwounded men then continued the retirement. Shortly afterwards some Germans appeared, took the Colonel's revolver and field-glass and broke the men's rifles, but otherwise left them alone. After dark, lights began to appear in the distance—in the outskirts of Wiheries village—and one light appeared about three hundred yards from where the Colonel lay. The Colonel asked if any of the wounded near him were able to walk, but got no reply. Hearing someone in the distance faintly calling, the Colonel replied and found it was Sergeant Dowling who said his legs were smashed.

There was a wire fence running towards the distant lights from near where the Colonel lay. He crawled

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on his hand (the other was wounded) and knees to the fence and made his way along this towards the nearest light, and eventually reached a cottage. The door was opened and a young German officer came out and said " Hullo ! what's this." He had the Colonel carried into the cottage—which was occupied by a German guard—and placed on some straw, and first aid was rendered by a German Doctor. The Colonel told him the position of some of our wounded, and of Sergeant Dowling. The Doctor took out a party and brought in some of the wounded, but Sergeant Dowling could not be found. The Colonel appeared worried about Dowling and told the Doctor he was one of his best sergeants and was seriously wounded. The Doctor again went out and shortly afterwards brought Dowling in.

The young German officer did what little he could to make them comfortable and seemed sad about the war with England, where, he said, he had spent many happy holidays. The following morning he took the Colonel by car to a convent school at Wiheries which had been formed into a temporary hospital (passing by the way a German battalion on parade) and there found Sergeant Dowling [1] and other Cheshire wounded but no officers.

The Colonel's thoughts were of his soldiers. He said " Every man behaved splendidly, not one failing to do his duty." One can picture the Colonel's state of mind when, supposing that he acted as a pivot with

1 Sergt. Dowling was interned, and died at Rouen in 1917, while on his way home.

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strong supports on either side, he found his battalion alone facing the 4th German Army Corps, composed (according to General Von Kluck's "The March on Paris," 1920) of twenty-five battalions of infantry, six squadrons of cavalry, twenty-four batteries of artillery and fifty-six machine guns. The Cheshire battalion had only two machine guns.

The Colonel and Sergeant Meachin managed to get away from the hospital and hid in a village. The Germans got to know that they were there and told the Burgomaster that they must be given up or the village would be burnt and the inhabitants shot. They managed to get away and a few days later reached Brussels where they were assisted by that brave nurse who, shortly afterwards, suffered death rather than leave her post. Here the Colonel had an operation on his foot. They got identity cards, but the Colonel could not walk. Meachin disguised as a "fish hawker" succeeded in getting to Flushing and thence to Folkstone. The Colonel was not so fortunate as, on reaching Villevorde, his passport (procured unofficially by some friends) was seen to be not quite in order. He was ordered to appear before the Commandant at Brussels and was interned at Ruhleben.

Lieutenant Elliot, of "A" Company, was spoken of by all the men in terms of the greatest praise.

Private J. Burns, 9816, voluntarily assisted to remove under heavy fire wounded men to a place of safety, he himself being wounded. He eventually received the D.C.M.

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Lieutenant K. T. Frost, "G" Company, was killed during the retirement, while gallantly fighting against great odds. Lieutenant Frost belonged to the 3rd, or Reserve battalion of the Regiment and attended camp the previous summer. He was Lecturer on Ancient Archæology at Queen's University, Belfast, and a well-known authority on Greek, Egyptian, and Roman subjects. He was an M.A., and Bachelor of Literature, Oxford, and a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society.

He always had a keen desire to become a professional soldier but defective eyesight prevented this. Great was his delight when he was appointed to serve as a reserve officer with the 1st Battalion at the Front. Officers and men speak of his bravery—of how he refused to surrender and fought on until he had received seven wounds, meeting at last the death which of all others, he would have chosen. The Germans, appreciating his bravery, buried him with military honours. Lieutenant Gallagher of the 4th Dragoon Guards remarked "I saw K. T. Frost [1] fighting like a demon, having refused to surrender."

Captain G. Ware, R.A.M.C., attached to the Battalion, greatly distinguished himself. Although under heavy shell and rifle fire he insisted on attending to the wounded. Of the eight stretchers with the battalion, seven were left in the field with dressed wounded men on them ready for removal; many of the bad cases

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1 Lieut. K. T. Frost was eventually buried in the cemetery at Wiheries.

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saying " Never mind me ! look to yourself and the name of the old corps ; I am done for."

That evening, 24th, the Roll was called in a valley three miles north of the town of Bavai. Out of 1,007 men and 27 officers of the battalion who took part in the action that day, only 192 men and six officers (including the R.A.M.C. officer) answered the call. Most of those captured were taken by the 72nd Infantry Regiment, 7th Division, IV. Corps. The British loss that day was 4,200 officers and men.

Colonel Boger was evidently not aware that the army was retreating [1] or that after successfully covering the retirement of the 3rd Division the 5th Division was ordered to retire. Sir Charles Fergusson, in command of the 5th at once saw that if this order were carried out his left would almost certainly be enveloped. He therefore used his Divisional Reserve, composed of the Norfolks and the Cheshire (with the 119th Battery) as a flank-guard ; and seeing that the cavalry were falling back more quickly than his Division, he sent a message to General Allenby (Commanding the Cavalry Division), saying that he could not possibly extricate his Division unless prompt and effective help was given by the Cavalry to help to cover his left flank. General Allenby at once agreed, and his cavalry therefore joined

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1 The French Army on the East side, under General Lanrezae, had commenced to retire on the 22nd, and was in full retreat the following day, and that evening (23rd) three German Corps were moving against the British Front and a fourth round the left. It was therefore necessary to withdraw the British Army to avoid being enveloped.

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in the flank-guard action covering the withdrawal—about 1 p.m.—of the remainder of the 5th Division. Colonel Ballard, who was in command of the two battalions, knew that the whole Division was to retire and that he had to act as flank-guard with his own battalion (Norfolk), the Cheshire, and artillery; but this order was not communicated to Colonel Boger.[1] We do know that half of the left company of the Norfolks had moved from its original position to one much farther advanced (the coal-mine on the east front of the mineral railway) where there was a better field of fire. Communication was almost impossible owing to the heavy shell and rifle fire over the exposed and isolated position of the Cheshire who were eventually left alone on the field.

Considerable light is thrown on this stage of the battle by Brigadier-General J. E. Edmunds, C.B., C.M.G., R.E., in his History of the Great War, published 1922. Referring to the second attack he says:—"Meanwhile the effect of the advance of the Germans to the east of Colonel Ballard's flank-guard was beginning to be felt, and the 119th Battery between the fire of the three German batteries and of a machine gun at much closer range, was suffering considerably. One section, the first that had come into action, fired at the hostile infantry until it was within eight hundred yards, and then withdrew. The four remaining guns were brought off by the battery commander, Major Alexander one at a time, with the help of a party of 9th Lancers.

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1 Lieut -Colonel Boger's official report.

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The Norfolks then fell back in two parties under a continuous hail of shrapnel bullets, leaving a hundred of their wounded behind at Elouges. Most unfortunately, both the second in command and the adjutant were wounded at this critical moment and thus one platoon [sic. two] in an advanced position received no orders to retire."

"Colonel Ballard sent to the Cheshire three separate messages to fall back not one of which reached them. The Major of "L" Battery also received no order, but seeing no sign of the Norfolks and having fired away nearly the whole of his ammunition, was meditating withdrawal when the Brigade-major of the 2nd Cavalry Brigade arrived and directed him to bring his battery out of action." In a footnote the General states :— "Major Alexander received the V.C. for 'handling his battery against overwhelming odds with such conspicuous success that all his guns were saved, not withstanding that they had to be withdrawn by hand by himself and three other men.'" "Captain Francis Grenfell, 9th Lancers, also received the V.C. on this day for gallantry in action and for assisting to save the guns of the 119th Battery."

Colonel Boger, being a prisoner of war, was unable to forward his report to those in higher command until June, 1918. In this he remarked :—"I gathered, perhaps wrongly, that a stand to a finish on our line and vigorous counter-attacks was intended. At all events the Battalion was able to keep the enemy back practically till dark. I do not know at what time the Norfolk

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Regiment retired [1] but their retirement caused the envelopment of our right flank and an attack on our rear, our left became also involved and the result to our widely extended line was to leave no alternative but counter-attack by charging and then surrender except to such scattered units as could manage to make good their retirement."

" Our position was soon enveloped on both flanks. Captain Dyer (wounded) from the road headed a gallant charge, or counter-attack, with the remnants then with him and his coolness throughout the action was thoroughly characteristic of him. Captain Jolliffe was severely wounded in the same charge. He was bold and resourceful in command of his portion of Captain Shore's Company which was partly in the open and partly in the wood and necessitated him moving about a good deal under fire.

All the officers and men under my command fought their hardest and did the best they could under the circumstances, no portion of the blame for the disaster which overtook the Battalion can rest on their shoulders.

Beside Captain (now temporary Major) Dyer and Captain Jolliffe I wish to bring to your notice the undermentioned officers and men as having performed noteworthy service: their cases are typical and represent many similar acts on the part of officers and men which have passed unnoticed or unrecorded.

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1 The Norfolk's appear to have retired about 3-30. F.S.

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Lieut. C. A. K. Matterson and a private soldier [1] went as scouts across the Mons Canal to the enemy lines on the night of 23-24 August and brought back information.

Lieut. Spencer Jacobs showed keenness and pluck in leading forward his platoon against a body of the enemy advancing up the slope under cover.

Lieutenant H. C. Randall fought the machine guns with skill and contempt of danger under heavy fire.

Lieutenant Elliot (wounded) was observed cheerily encouraging his men and assisting wounded men from the open to behind cover (since awarded D.S.O.)

Capt. E. R. Jones was killed during the retreat of a remnant of his company, having declined to surrender although severely wounded.

I have been informed he was buried by the enemy with military honours and with his sword and revolver. [2]

Major B. H. Chetwynd Stapylton, senior Major, and Captain V. R. Tahourdin, Adjutant, gave me every possible assistance and help.

8103 Sergeant Barrow.

7963 Private Spencer.

9327 Private Taylor.

Machine gun section carried out their orders under heavy fire in a cool and plucky manner worthy of all praise.

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1 Corporal Tunnicliffe. F.S.

2 Capt. Jones, " D " Coy., about 4 p.m., joined No. 9 Platoon (" C " Coy), and when retiring was shot. He had no sword with him at that time. This is vouched for by the four survivors present at the time. See pages 45-6.

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The guns were necessarily exposed to heavy enemy artillery and rifle fire.

8799 Sergt. W. J. Smith, " A " Company, proved himself to be a valuable leader. He led his platoon with gallantry in the final charge on the advancing Germans.

8261 Pte. F. Woodier, " A " Company, volunteered for every dangerous duty for which a private soldier had to be detailed. He assisted in stopping a stampeded S.A.A. cart under a hot fire; carried Corporal Twinnings when wounded to cover and joined in the final charge. He escaped from Osnabruck on April 7th, 1918, and crossed the Dutch frontier on April 14th. This was his second attempt to escape.

Private D. Thorp, " A " Company, number not known, a reservist of three years' Colour service, volunteered for every dangerous duty. He helped to stop the stampeded S.A.A. cart and joined in the final charge.

9877 Corporal H. R. Fleet and Private Riley (number and initials not known) were in the first time of of the charge. After charging they knelt in the open and continued firing till both fell badly wounded.

4277 Sergt. A. Raynor, " C " Company, after being under heavy fire for several hours, collected all available men in his vicinity and offered much resistance to the enemy until surrounded by many times their number.

144 Private T. Vaughan, and 6893 Private J. Moore, " C " Company, when Company Sergt.-Major W. A. Francis was lying wounded in an exposed position, the

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above two men tried to carry him to safety. Owing to the heavy fire the C. S.-Major told them to leave him and retire with the company. They did retire a little way but came back again and again tried to move the C.S.M. who then ordered these men to leave him. At that time, an enemy machine gun was enfilading the place where the C.S.M. was lying.

Private Vaughan died in Doebritz as a prisoner of war."

Major General Lord Edward Gleichen in command of the 15th Infantry Brigade, in forwarding Colonel Boger's report to General Sir Charles Fergusson, who was in command of the 5th Division said :—

" Sir,

I have quite recently received from Lt.-Colonel D. C. Boger, late Commanding 1st Bn. Cheshire Regiment an account of the battle on our left flank about Elouges on 24 8 14, in which his battalion suffered very severe losses something like 700 out of 900 being killed, wounded or taken prisoners.

In his account which I forward herewith, and which I beg may be returned to me, he includes a list of recommendations and of this I forward a separate copy.

It is unfortunate that this list was not sent in long ago ; but it was impossible as long as Colonel Boger was a prisoner. He was only transferred a few weeks ago to Holland where he is now interned. . . . . I forward it to you, Sir, as having then been in Command of the 5th Division of which my 15th Brigade then formed a part.

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In view of the gallant fight put up by the Cheshires who formed one of my best battalions, I beg strongly to recommend that action be taken on Colonel Boger's recommendation.

The battalion—what was left of it together with reinforcements—fought very well subsequently and received practically no recognition for its services; as those whom I should have recommended during the period (Aug. 14th to March 15th) when I commanded the Brigade were nearly all killed or missing.

It would therefore, I submit, be only an act of justice to a gallant battalion if some recognition of its past services were now granted.

My recommendations [1] are as follows, in this order:

Captain A. J. L. Dyer	D.S.O.
8216 Pte. F. Woodier	D.C.M.
4277 Sergt. A. Rayner	D.C.M.
Captain E. C. Jolliffe	D.S.O.
Pte. D. Thorpe	D.C.M.
Lt.-Colonel D. C. Boger	D.S.O.
8799 Sergt. W. T. Smith	D.C.M.
8013 Sergt. Barrow	D.C.M.
Lieut. C. A. K. Matterson	Mention
Lieut. H. C. Randall	,,
Major Chetwynd Stapylton	,,
Capt. V. R. Tahourdin	,,
Lieut. G. S. Jacobs	,,

1 Although these honours were fully deserved, some of the recommendations—owing to lapse of time, etc., were not carried out.

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Lieut. W. G. R. Elliot	... ...	Mention
7963 Pte. Spencer	... ...	,,
9877 Pte. Taylor	... ...	,,
Pte. Riley	... ...	,,
6893 Pte. J. Moore	... ...	,,

* * * *

I am, Sir, Your Obedient Servant,
(*Signed*) Edward Gleichen,
Major General."

Lieut.-General Sir Charles Fergusson, in forwarding his report 23 June, 1918, said—" I venture to hope that some recognition may be given to the officers and other ranks mentioned. The Battalion (1st Cheshire Regiment) with the 1st Norfolk Regt., were detached to cover the left flank of the 5th Division during the withdrawal on the day in question, the division having been ordered to hold its ground until the remainder of the British force had fallen back.

" It was due to the gallant action of these two battalions that the Division was able to extricate itself and this is the first account as to what happened in that particular part of the field. The fact, however, that this very heavy enemy attack was held long enough to allow of the withdrawal of the division is sufficient testimony to the gallantry and devotion of the two Battalions concerned.

(*Signed*) Charles Fergusson,
Lieutenant-General,
Commanding XVII. Corps."

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After calling the roll in the little valley of St. Waast that evening (24th), the remnant of the Battalion moved south of Bavai and bivouacked for the night, moving off about 2-30 a.m., with the main column and took part in the retirement to St. Quentin, turning about and fighting rearguard actions the whole of the way. Such a retirement has never been equalled in the annals of warfare.

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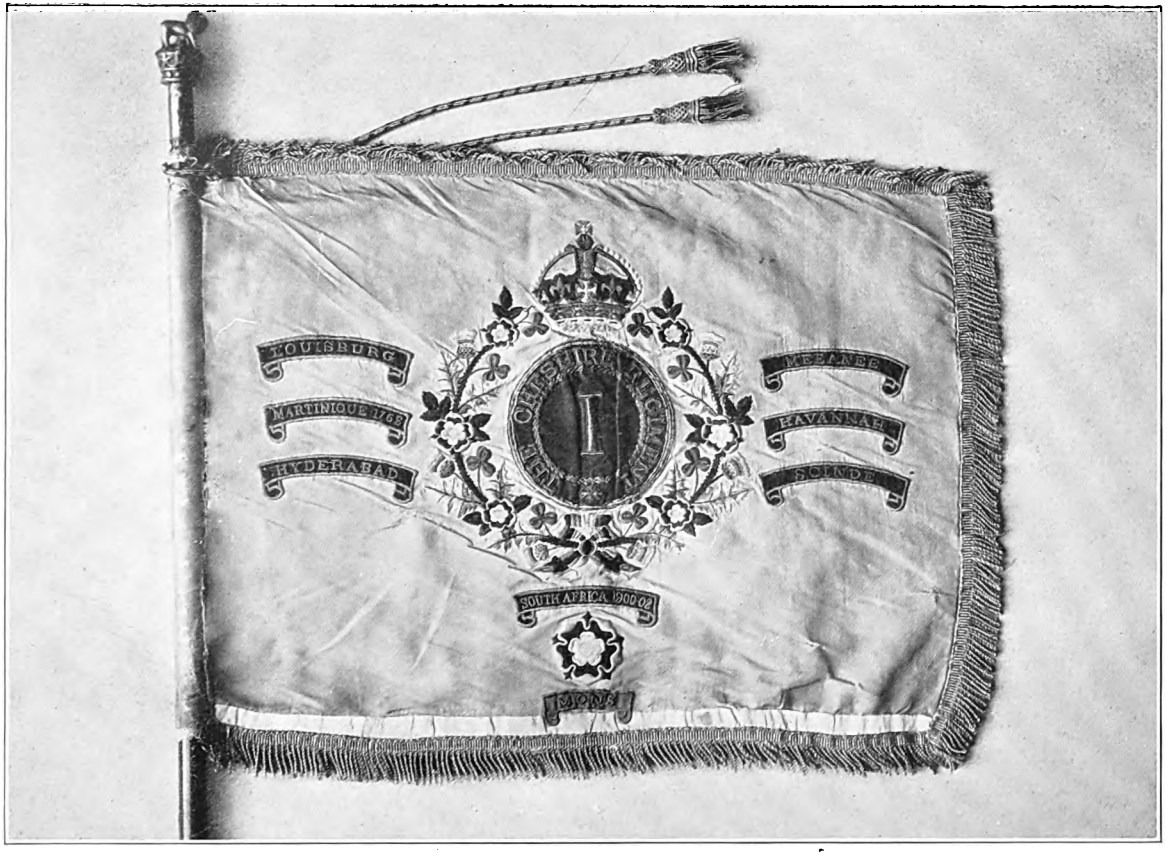

Photo by *R. W. Morris & Son, Chester*

The Miniature Colour

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THE MINIATURE COLOUR.

IN 1911, the ladies of the 1st Battalion The Cheshire Regiment were asked by Lieut.-Colonel Kellie, then commanding the Battalion, if they would work, and present, a miniature replica of the Regimental Colour, about a quarter the size of the original, so that it might be competed for by the various companies of the Battalion. This the ladies agreed to do, and it was presented in Belfast on Meeanee Day, February 17th, 1912, to the best shooting company of that year. " F " Company was the first recipient.

The Colour was competed for each summer and was hung in the barrack room of the company holding it. This company was called the colour company, supplied the guards of honour, and formed the escort for the colours for that year.

The Colour is 22½ inches wide, 18 inches deep, and is surrounded on three sides by gold fringe 1¼ inches deep. The staff is 49½ inches in length surmounted by a lion gilt.

On August 5th, 1914, the 1st Battalion received orders to mobilize for active service. The miniature colour was at that time held by " B " Company, and it

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was arranged by several officers and one or two N.C.O's. that the colour should be taken out with them so that it might be carried when they entered Berlin.

The Battalion left Belfast on Friday, August 14th, 1914, on board the S.S. Massillia, and the colour accompanied them. Capt. Shore, of " B " Company, handed it to 9461 Drummer C. Baker, one of the finest athletes in the Battalion, at the same time telling him he was to stick to it to the last, and that if he should get badly wounded he was to hand it to some other reliable man. Baker declared he would faithfully carry out his Captain's command.

Baker carried the colour into action on that memorable day, August 24th, 1914. As the Battalion marched past Dour Station to take up a position on the extreme left of the line, between Dour and Elouges, Baker was seen carrying the colour in its little black case at the trail. Orders had been sent for the troops to retire, but no order was received by the Cheshire Regiment, who were left alone on the field. They held out until all their ammunition was expended and kept at bay the whole of the German 4th Army Corps. The Germans then rushed on in horse-shoe formation and partly surrounded the last little band of Cheshire who, nothing daunted, fixed bayonets and, led by their Officers, Captains Dyer, Jolliffe and Massey, and Lieut. Matterson charged the enemy. Baker, seeing the position was hopeless, rushed into a house in the village of Audregnies, climbed the garret staircase, and under the eaves hid the colour behind some straw. By signs, he begged

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the occupiers not to give the colour to anyone but an Englishman. Baker had just got clear of the house when the Germans entered the village and took the little band prisoners. A German Officer, a Major, seeing Baker without a rifle, asked what he had done with it, and, holding a pistol to his forehead, threatened to shoot him unless he at once said where it was hidden. Baker tried to explain by signs that he was a drummer and did not carry a rifle. After some ten minutes expostulation, the German appeared to understand and then had the prisoners searched, stripping them of everything they possessed. They were then marched to a field where some more of their comrades were held prisoners. After remaining there the night, they commenced their journey to Germany, where they arrived six days later.

Private Riley, who was wounded at Audregnies on the 24th, was taken into the convent of the Holy Family in the Rue de L 'Eglise, Audregnies (a village on the Franco Belgian frontier between Mons and Valenciennes) which had been turned into a Belgian Red Cross Ambulance Hospital during the night of August 24-5. Knowing where Baker had hidden the colour, and fearing it might be found by the Germans, he confided the circumstances to a Sister, or Nun, named St. Leon, and begged her to get someone to recover the colour and place it in security.

Sister St. Leon acquainted the Cure, C. Soudan, with the facts and acted as interpreter between Riley and the Priest at a subsequent interview.

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The Rev. Father proceeded to the house of M. Alphonse Martin, Rue de L, Abbate, described by Riley, and found the colour in the garret, or loft.

The Cure, accompanied by M. Alphonse Vallee, Schoolmaster of Audregnies, and son-in-law of M. Matin, removed the colour to his house. M. Valle removed the lion from the top of the staff and kept it as evidence. The Cure kept the colour at his house for a time, and then, for greater security, took it to the Church and hid it behind one of the Choir Stalls.

The writer, about this time, was given particulars of the colour and the names and addresses of the two men who knew all about it, also the name and address of the lady on whose property it was originally hidden, so that he might be able to communicate the information to the proper authorities at some opportune time. He informed Lieut.-Col. M. F. Clarke that he had these particulars.

In November, 1914, the Germans were searching everywhere for cotton and copper, and the Cure, fearing the colour might be discovered, acquainted M. Georges Dupont, Communal Secretary, or Town Clerk, with the circumstances, and expressed to him fears he had on the subject of the trust which had been laid on him, and of the difficulty of finding a safe hiding place. M. Dupont then offered to place the colour in the garret of the Communal Girls' School of which his wife was the Principal, and which had no apparent opening. The Cure accepted the offer and carried the colour without delay to M. Dupont's house who then hid it in the place

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M. C. Soudan,
Curé of Audregnies,
who assisted to preserve the Miniature Colour.

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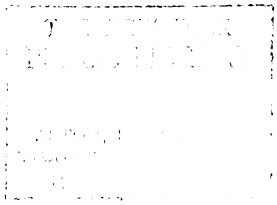

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mentioned. That this precaution was necessary, soon became evident. The Germans, having received an anonymous letter informing them that a colour had been hidden in Audregnies, spent five days in searching all the houses, and as they were unable to find it, offered a reward of 2,000 marks for its surrender.

On October, 1918, the Battalion happened to be within twelve miles of Audregnies and remembering what the writer of this article had said, the Commanding Officer, Lieut.-Col. Clarke, wrote him :—

" Dear Mr. Simpson,

" Could you let us know where the little Colour " is to be found ? I believe you have all the evi- " dence collected about it. Do you know the name " of the place and the people to whom it was en- " trusted ? If it is still in existence we ought to " be able to get it.

" In haste,

Yours sincerely,

M. F. CLARKE."

The writer immediately sent the information he possessed, and on November 13th, 1918, received a letter from the Colonel saying : " Many thanks for your information. I am sending out a search party at once and hope it will be successful."

The Quartermaster (Capt. Sproule), accompanied by Captain Radcliffe, visited Audregnies on Friday, November 15th, and applied to the persons whose addresses had been communicated to the Colonel. They were informed that the colour was quite safe but, that

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as it was bricked up in a wall, it would take some little time to get it out. It was arranged that the Officers should call for it on the following Sunday (17th). Col. Clarke being unwell, Major Busfeild, accompanied by the Adjutant (Capt. Rutter), Capt. Radcliffe, and Capt. Inman, went to Audregnies and received the colour.

Within a few days the Commanding Officer (Lieut.-Col. Clarke) writing from Le Quesnoy said :—

" We have recovered the little colour. Many " thanks for your information. It is quite intact " and as good as when it was first made."

On December 11th, 1918, Major Busfeild, writing on behalf of Lieut.-Col. Clarke, who was off duty sick wrote saying :—

" Dear Sir,

" I wish to express the thanks of all for your " letter which enabled us to recover the small " miniature colour of the 1st Cheshire Regiment."

On December 3rd, 1918, the King, the Prince of Wales, and Prince Albert, when visiting the various towns in the neighbourhood of the Foret-de-Mormal, inspecting the troops quartered in the district, paid a visit to Le Quesnoy. In the main square of this ancient town, with its triple line of fortifications, the 1st Cheshire Regiment were formed up (C.S.M. Cavey, D.C.M., M.M., of " B " Company carrying the miniature colour), and on His Majesty's arrival, gave him three hearty cheers. After the Mayor had read an address, and the Mayor and Corporation had been introduced to His Majesty, the miniature regimental colour of the Battalion was

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M. Georges Dupont,
Secrétaire Communal of Audregnies, in the province
of Hainaut, Belguim, through whose devotion
the Miniature Colour was preserved.

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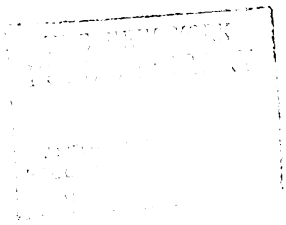

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brought up for his inspection and he enquired as to its origin, loss, and recovery. His Majesty appeared much interested in it, and whilst congratulating the Battalion on its recovery, said he trusted it would never be lost again.

On Friday, February 28th, 1919, presentations were made to the three Belgians to whom chiefly the Battalion was indebted for the safety of the miniature colour—the village Priest, M. C. Soudan, the village Schoolmaster, M. Alphonse Vallee, and the Communal Secretary, M. Georges Dupont. To these three, in gratitude for their services, officers then serving and officers who had served in the Battalion just before the War (the balance being made up by a small contribution from the Battalion funds) subscribed a testimonial consisting, for each, of an illuminated handpainted address on parchment surmounted by a representation of the Regimental Colours flanked by wreaths of oak leaves and signed by Lieut.-Col. M. F. Clarke, D.S.O. (Commanding Officer), also a tastefully designed silver rose bowl on an ebony stand, suitably engraved with the name of the recipient and the circumstances of the presentation.

The Battalion at the time was stationed at Gambloux, north of Namur, about 60 miles from the village of Audregnies and, owing to the distance, and the poor means of communication existing at that time in Belgium, a formal ceremony was impossible. No means could be found of giving the three Belgians notice of when the presentations would be made. The

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use of a car was obtained and three officers, Capt. L. E. Davies, M.C., Capt. Goldie, R.A.M.C. (the Battalion Medical Officer) who translated to the recipients the text of the illuminated addresses, and Capt. Thomas, R.A.S.C. (who procured the car) made the journey, visited each of the three gentlemen in turn, and informally made the presentations.

The following account of the visit was given by one of the visiting officers :—

" We first of all called upon the Cure, whom we found at home. Tall, with abundant iron grey hair, his long black cassock made him look taller still. In manner he was a typical village Priest. He received us with dignity and whatever surprise our sudden appearance and purpose might have caused him, he betrayed none of it. He thanked us all gracefully, and on our leaving, trudged with us in carpet slippers through the muddy street to make sure we found the most convenient way to the next recipient. The schoolmaster, a genial little man of middle age, bustled round. Handing us over to his wife and daughter, he hastened back to the school to cut short the session, joining us as soon as he could release his young flock from their lessons. We heard from him the story of how the colour was saved, how the enemy learning of its existence through an anonymous letter, searched persistently for it and came near finding it, and of the subterfuges to which resort had to be made to defeat their efforts. The presentation to the communal secretary, whom we unearthed busy amid piles of official

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documents, was practically a repetition of this procedure. Both families were delighted to have our little souvenirs of the service they had been able to render the Battalion, and their acknowledgments were almost embarrassing in their cordiality. At each place we were not allowed to leave until we had drunk the health of Belgium and the Battalion in fine old wine which had been buried in some mysterious hiding place to save it from the Bosche."

The address reads as follows :—

" To.....

" The 1st Battalion of the Cheshire Regiment " of the British Army desire to express to you their " deep gratitude for the services you rendered in " connection with the preservation of the mininture " Regimental Colour of the Battalion from the " hands of the common foe.

" This flag, which is an exact replica in miniature of the Regimental Colour, was made by the " ladies of the Regiment in 1911, and was presented " annually to the best shooting company. During " the retreat from Mons in August, 1914, it was " carried by a soldier of the Battalion, who, when " wounded and pursued by the enemy, hid it in a " barn.

" It was eventually found and, owing to the " devotion of three citizens of Audregnies, was " faithfully preserved for over four years of enemy " occupation, until at length it was restored to the

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" Battalion, when the tide of battle had turned,
" on November 17th, 1918.

" In token of their gratitude, the officers, non-
" commissioned officers and men of the Battalion
" hope that you, as one of those who preserved to
" them an emblem of such value, will accept the
" accompanying piece of plate as a lasting memento
" of the occasion."

The two men of the Battalion who were so closely associated with the colour were taken prisoners and interned in Germany. Baker did not die, as officially stated. He reported at Chester Castle 6/3/19, and was demobilized 8/3/19. Pte. Riley 9865 arrived at the Depot 15/3/19, and was demobolized on leave 24/4/19.

When the Cadre of the Battalion, consisting of 26 men under the command of Capt. (now Major) Sproule, M.C., returned from France, they were given a splendid reception on their arrival at Chester on April 25th, 1919. The Regimental Colours were decorated with oak and acorn wreaths, but the colour which attracted most attention was the miniature carried by Corporal " Todger " Jones, V.C., D.C.M.

This colour will always be treasured by men of the Regiment as one of its historic treasures.

The Miniature Colour is not mentioned in the " Digest of Service " before 1918.

The 1st Battalion sailed for India 6th March, 1922, and took with it the Miniature Colour.

A new miniature colour was purchased in 1927 from

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Messrs. Hobson's, London, as it was not considered possible, at that time, for the officers' wives to work it.

A special parade was held at Connaught Barracks, Poona, on 22nd June, and the old Miniature Colour was marched round the Battalion, the band playing " Auld Lang Syne." The Colour was then brought out to the front by the Colour-Sergeant of the Colour Company (" C " Company), who handed it over to the Colonel's wife, Mrs. Adair, who then handed it to Captain Elliot. The Captain then faced the Battalion and a General Salute was given.

The new Colour was then marched to the Officers' Mess by the Colour Company, Captain Elliot following in rear with the old Colour, cased.

In the July following, Captain Elliot returned home on leave bringing with him the old Miniature Colour which he deposited at the Regimental Depot, Chester.

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FRONTISPIECE.

List of Names.

Back row :

Lt. G. L. F. Houstoun, Lt. J. C. Sproule,
Lt. T. L. Frost*, 2Lt. A. D. Milner.

2nd row from back :

Lt. C. A. K. Matterson, Lt. A. C. Campbell*,
Lt. H. C. Randall.

Intermediate row :

Capt. E. A. Jackson, Capt. C. E. Jolliffe,
Lt. H. I. St. J. Hartford*, Lt. W. G. R. Elliot,
Capt. V. R. Tahourdin (Adjutant), Capt. J. L. Shore,
Capt. B. E. Massey.

Front row :

Capt. W. L. E. R. Dugmore,
Major D. C. Boger (taking over command),
Lt.-Col. H. F. Kellie (handing over command),
Capt. A. J. L. Dyer, Capt. E. R. Jones*.

Of the Officers appearing in the group, 16 were with the 1st Battalion when it went to the Great War.

The 4 marked * were killed in action.
Of the remainder, 7 were wounded and 4 invalided from war service.

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Drummers of the 1st Battalion, 1914.

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DRUMMERS

Drummers of the 1st Battalion on their visit to Chester from Londonderry for duty during H.M. King George's visit, March, 1914, under Drum-Major W. H. Heath.

From left to right:—

L/Cpl. Brookfield
L/Cpl. Bradshaw
Dr. Brennan
Dr. Blake [1]
Dr. Jackson
Dr. Bird
Dr. Parton
Dr. Baker [2]
Dr. Hogan [3]
Dr. Hammond
Dr. Bridges
Dr. Seabrook

1 —Present when Captain E. R. Jones was killed.
2.—Carried the Miniature Colour and hid it in the cottage.
3.—Shot, and buried same time as Captain E. R. Jones.

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